

THE

FROM THE FILES OF THE POLICE *DRAGNET*

10¢

INFORMER

INFORMER

APRIL

YUH DIRTY
STOOLIE!
THIS IS YER LAST
TRIP TO THE
COPS!

4TH
P. D.

PCT.
Q.

POLICE

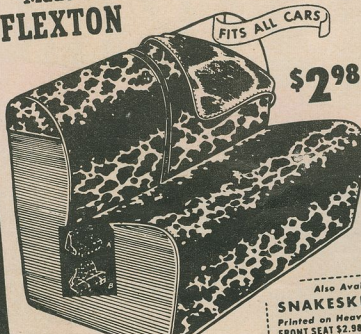
In this issue:
THE BLOOD-STAINED
MINK
THE END OF "HECTOR
THE SPECTRE"



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1400 CB 117 10 00

The city is an octopus flinging out its avenues like tentacles in all directions, mile after sprawling mile. the city is palatial penthouses and mildewed slums, broad boulevards and paper-thin alleyways, stately office buildings and tired tenements...tenements that huddle against each other as though seeking strength to stand another day.

The city is PEOPLE.

And the city's people like the city's buildings...some old, some young; some short, some tall. Some good, and some bad...

That's my life...the city's buildings and the city's people.

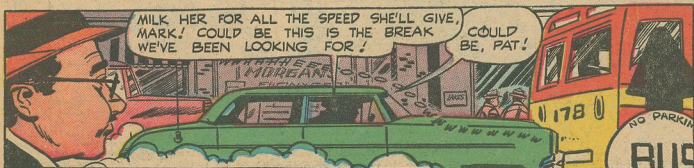
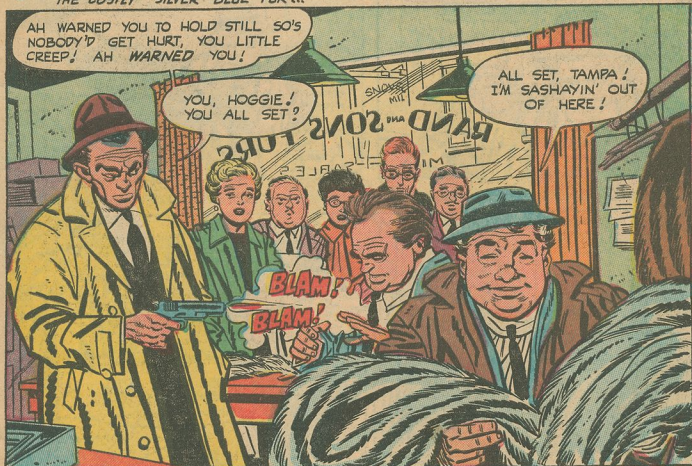
My name is Mark Fabian... Sergeant Mike Fabian.

I'm a cop.

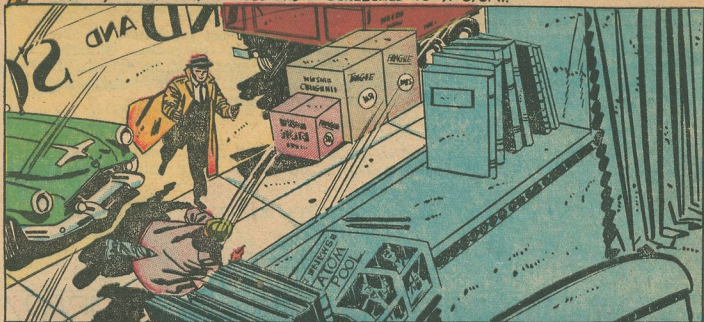


The BLOOD STAINED MINK

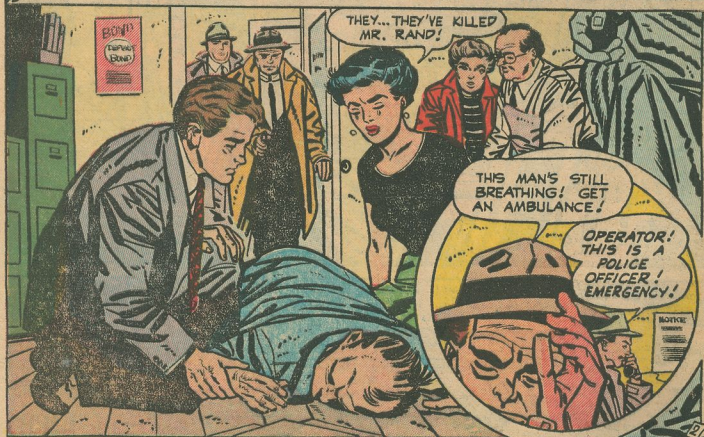
GUNFIRE FLASHES IN THE CITY'S GARMENT DISTRICT AND DROPS OF GRIMSON MOTTLE THE COSTLY SILVER BLUE FUR...



AT 4:54 P.M., MY PARTNER, PAT POLO AND I SCREECHED TO A STOP...



WE'RE A LITTLE TOO LATE. THE HEISTERS HAVE LAMMED WITH THEIR LOOT... ONLY THEIR BLOODY HANDWORK REMAINS..



WHEN THE WOUNDED MAN WAS CARRIED OFF, POLO AND I PUT THE STANDARD QUESTIONS TO THE FUR WORKERS...

THERE WERE TWO OF THEM...ONE SHORT, THE OTHER TALL...I WAS AFRAID TO LOOK TOO CLOSE!

I UNDERSTAND, MA'AM...



THE THUGS HAD MADE OFF WITH \$30,000 WORTH OF MINK. THE EMPLOYEES WERE TOO SCARED DURING THE HEIST TO BE OF MUCH HELP TO US NOW. WE DO GET ONE ITEM, THOUGH...

THE BIG ONE, THE ONE WHO DID THE SHOOTING, TALKED WITH AN ACCENT, SERGEANT! AND THE LITTLE GUY CALLED HIM TAMPA!

I HEARD THAT, TOO! HE WAS SOUTHERN, ALL RIGHT! THAT HELP ANY?

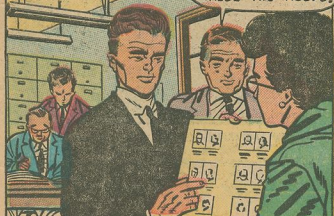
MIGHT! MIGHT HELP A LOT!



LATER, WE HERD THE EMPLOYEES DOWN TO THE MUG BUREAU. WE CAME UP EMPTY, LONG, WEARY HOURS GIVE US MARY A SINGLE LEAD...

THIS IS GONNA TAKE TIME, BUT WE APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION!

SING OUT IF YOU SPOT ANYONE THAT LOOKS EVEN FAINTLY LIKE EITHER OF THESE TWO HOOPS!



WELL, AS THE CLIMBER ASKED THE GUIDE WHEN THEY GOT TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP... WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

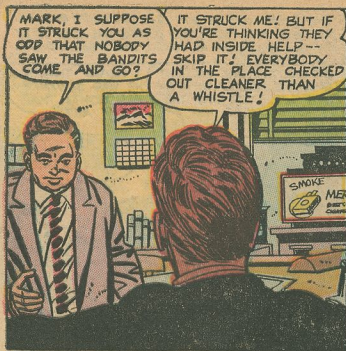
WE DRAG THE CITY! THEN I WANT THESE PEOPLE IN ON THE LINEUP!



WE PUT ON A GOOD SHOW FOR THE CITIZENS. WE GIVE THEM A GOOD LOOK AT EVERY MUG WE HAUL IN. WE MAKE EVERY CHARACTER TALK ON THE OFF CHANCE SOMEBODY WILL TAB A VOICE OR AN ACCENT. IT'S DEAD END, NOBODY RECOGNIZES A FACE OR A VOICE...

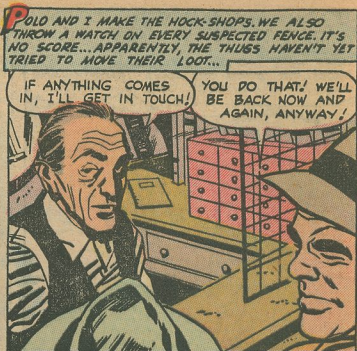
ALL RIGHT...NOW PUT YOUR HATS BACK ON! TURN SIDWAYS!





MARK, I SUPPOSE IT STRUCK YOU AS ODD THAT NOBODY SAW THE BANDITS COME AND GO?

IT STRUCK ME! BUT IF YOU'RE THINKING THEY HAD INSIDE HELP--- SKIP IT! EVERYBODY IN THE PLACE CHECKED OUT CLEANER THAN A WHISTLE!



POLO AND I MAKE THE HOCK-SHOPS. WE ALSO THROW A WATCH ON EVERY SUSPECTED FENCE. IT'S NO SCORE... APPARENTLY, THE THUGS HAVEN'T YET TRIED TO MOVE THEIR LOOT...

IF ANYTHING COMES IN, I'LL GET IN TOUCH!

YOU DO THAT! WE'LL BE BACK NOW AND AGAIN, ANYWAY!

AND RIGHT THEN THE HOODS HIT STILL ANOTHER MIDTOWN LOFT AND VANISH WITH A FORTUNE IN FURS...



FREEZE, YOU GREEPS! AH'M BLOWIN' THE HEAD OF ANYBODY THAT MOVES, Y'HEAR?

GET, MOVING HOGGIE!

I'M MOVIN' TAMPA... I'M MOVIN'!

NOW THE FUR INDUSTRY DEMANDS ACTION, AND THE MAYOR TALKS HARD TO THE POLICE COMMISSIONER. THE COMMISSIONER READS THE RIOT ACT TO THE CHIEF. THAT'S WHERE WE GET CALLED ON THE CARPET!



WE'RE STYMIED NOW, BUT PAT AND I FIGURE SOONER OR LATER, THE YEGGS HAVE TO START MOVING THEIR LOOT... AND THEN WE'LL GET A LINE ON THEM!

WE CAN'T WAIT FOR THAT--TOO MUCH PRES-SURE FROM ABOVE! I WANT THAT HEIST-HAPPY DUO COLLARED NOW! GET 'EM ANY WAY YOU CAN... BUT GET 'EM!



GET 'EM NOW, HE SAYS! AS IF WE AIN'T TRIED EVERYTHING...

THERE'S ONE THING WE HAVEN'T TRIED YET, PAT...



SO, IN THE NIGHT...

BEAK, WE WANT INFO ON A GUNNIE CALLED TAMPA AND HIS SIDE-KICK CALLED HOGGIE!

AND WE WANT IT FAST! GOT IT, BEAK? GOT ON THE GRAPEVINE ON THAT!

I'LL GET ON THE GRAPEVINE, FABIAN!



BEAK IS AN INFORMER, I'M A COP! I'M THE LAST GUY IN THE WORLD TO MAKE A HERO OF A STOOLEE! BUT KICK THIS AROUND A LITTLE:



LOTS OF YOU TAXPAYERS ARE SLEEPING BETWEEN YOUR LILY-WHITE SHEETS TONIGHT, AND LOTS OF YOU ARE GONNA LIVE ON AND COLLECT YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY BECAUSE SOME CANARY LIKE **BEAK** KEPT HIS EYES AND EARS PEELED AND MADE SWEET MUSIC TO A COP LIKE ME...



JUST KEEP IN MIND THE NUMBER OF CRIMES THAT WOULD BE COMMITTED BY KILLERS AND OTHER GRIFTERS HAD NOT THEIR DIDDOS BEEN BRAKED TO A SUDDEN HALT BY AN INFORMER. JUST KEEP THAT IN MIND.

SO WE WAIT A LONG TIME ON **BEAK**. WE WAIT A LONG LONG TIME. THEN...



HERE'S THE BEST I CAN DO, **FABIAN!** THE VINE THINKS THE FUR HEISTS ARE PULLED A COUPLE OF LAMMISTERS FROM FLORIDA! THEY'RE HOLED UP IN A WEST SIDE FLEA BAG!



THE ADDRESS! DID YOU GET THE ADDRESS?

YEAH... 12TH AVENUE AND C STREET! BUT REMEMBER, **FABIAN**... I AIN'T SURE...



WE'LL THROW A TAIL ON 'EM, PRONTO! I OWE YOU A FAVOR, **BEAK!**

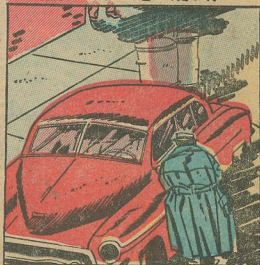
9:10 A.M. WE GO THROUGH THE FLOPHOUSE, BUT THE YEGGS WERE STALKING ARE OUT. THE CLERK DOESN'T SAVVY WHERE THEY WENT...



PROBABLY, SAYS PAT GRIMLY, THEY'RE OFF CASING ANOTHER JOINT TO KNOCK OVER. BUT WE KNOW WE'RE ON TO SOMETHING. THAT TRUCK PARKED THERE IS NO COINCIDENCE...

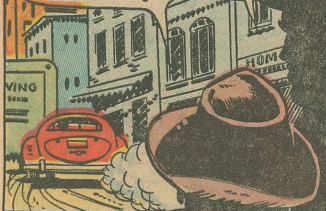


11:12 A.M. ENTER A CHARACTER WHO MIGHT BE THE SMALLER OF THE DUO WE'RE AFTER. THE THING THAT STOPS US IS... HE'S ALONE! AND HE DOESN'T EVEN FLICK AN EYELASH AT THE TRUCK.



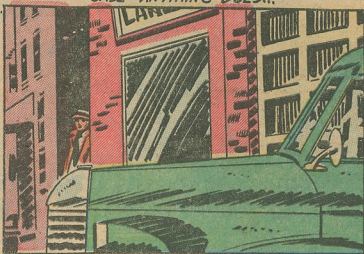
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MARK? IS HE ONE OF OUR BIRDS OR IS HE? DO WE TAIL HIM OR DO WE STICK HERE?

THERE'S A WHOLE FLOCK OF \$64 QUESTIONS FOR YOU!



HAVE TO MAKE AN IMPORTANT DECISION, SO I SIC PAT ONTO THE SUSPECT. POLO TAKES AFTER HIM IN OUR CAR...

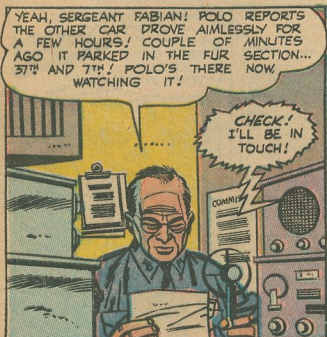
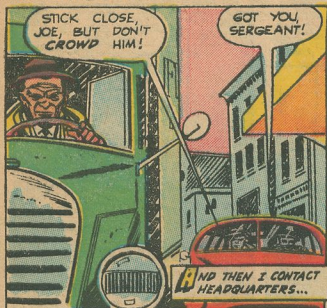
4:10 P.M. TALK ABOUT COPS HAVING FLAT FEET! WELL, HERE'S ONE OF THE REASONS. SEVEN HOURS I'M STANDING HERE NOW. NOT A THING'S HAPPENED EXCEPT PAT'S RADIOED ANOTHER DEPARTMENT CAR, WHICH IS STANDING BY AROUND THE CORNER IN CASE ANYTHING DOES...



4:20 A.M. THIS COULD BE IT! THAT BIG GUY COMING DOWN THE STREET...



THIS IS IT! I FLAG MY WAITING CAR AND TAKE OFF AFTER TAMPA IN THE TRUCK...



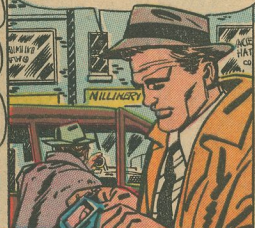
IT'S NO SURPRISE TO ME THAT MY PIGEON PULLS UP AT 37TH AND 7TH BECAUSE BY NOW I'VE GOT AN IDEA OF HOW THE THUGS OPERATE WITHOUT MERCHANTS OR PASSERBY GETTING HEP UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE!



POLO JOINS ME AS SOON AS I PARK IN TAMPA'S WAKE...



...MAKE IT A SIGNAL THIRTY-TWO...WE DON'T WANT SIRENS TO ALERT THOSE GUNSELS! HERE'S WHAT I WANT DONE...



GIVE PAT SOME INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT AND LEAVE HIM THERE TO SEE THEY'RE RAPIDED THROUGH.

THEN I GO UPSTAIRS!





...THE DOOR OPENS AND OUT COMES HOGGIE! HE'S LOADED WITH LOOT BUT HE LOOKS FOR ALL THE WORLD LIKE ANY OTHER MESSENGER. NO WONDER, ON THEIR PREVIOUS HEISTS, NOBODY EVER NOTICED HIM LOADING THE TRUCK!

THIS FIGURES TO BE TIGHT AND GO FROM HERE ON IN. I HAVE TO COLLAR THE FUR THIEVES BUT I DON'T WANT ANY INNOCENT PEOPLE GETTING HURT. JUST THEN...



DROP THE GUN, TAMPA! DON'T TURN! DON'T MOVE! DON'T EVEN BREATHE!! JUST DROP IT!



DON'T SHOOT, MISTUH! DON'T SHOOT!



I ...



NOW YOU THROW YO' GUN OUT HEAH, COP! ELSE I PICK ME UP A EASIER TARGET, LIKE A COUPLE OF THESE HERE WORKERS!

AND AT THIS IMMEDIATE MOMENT, THE JOINT STARTS JUMPING! THE THUG PULLS A SECOND GUN AND SNAPS A SHOT AT ME! I DUCK...BUT...

I CAN'T SHOOT HIM FOR FEAR I'LL SHOOT THEM!

I THROW MY GUN DOWN. TAMPA GRABS AN ARMPFUL OF MINK AND BACKS OUT THE DOOR, AND RIGHT THEN I HEAR GUNFIRE! I COME RUNNING OUT TO FIND THAT POLO HAS ARRIVED AND, LIKE THE MARINES, HAS THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND!



UNH...
UH...

I ONLY PUT ONE THROUGH YOUR SHOULDER, SO YOU AIN'T DEAD, TAMPA! QUIT GROANING! AND QUIT LEAKING YOUR GORE ON THAT FUR!

NICE GOING, CHUM! DROPPED HIM WITH A SINGLE SLUG, EH?

MARK, I NEVER USE TWO WHEN ONE'LL DO THE TRICK! DON'T FORGET US COPS GOT TO PAY FOR OUR OWN BULLETS!



OF COURSE YOU KNOW HIS PAL HOGGIE PROVE OFF WITH A TRUCKLOAD OF LOOT!

OF **COURSE**... BUT FOLLOWING MY INSTRUCTIONS YOU FINGERED IT FOR THE POLICE CORDON AND THEY STOPPED IT! RIGHT?

RIGHT!



LATER, IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH SWEATING TO CRACK HOGGIE. HE COUGHS OUT ABOUT A WAREHOUSE OVER IN RICHMOND WHERE THEY'VE STASHED THEIR HAULS...

...AND THAT'S WHY YOU DICKS NEVER SPOTTED ANY OF IT, HOCKED OR FENCED! WE WERE FIXING TO HAVE THE GARMENTS ALTERED, THEN, WHEN THE HEAT'S OFF, WE'D PEDDLE 'EM IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY!



HOGGIE'S LAST ACT BEFORE THE DOORS CLANG SHUT BEHIND HIM IS TO LEAD US TO THE CACHE. THAT WRAPS IT UP...

SSST...MARK...YOU SUPPOSE THE DEPARTMENT'D INVESTIGATE ME IF MY WIFE SUDDENLY BREAKS OUT IN A MINK?

ON **YOUR** SALARY, YOU'D BE INVESTIGATED EVEN IF YOU **BOUGHT ONE!** SO PUT IT DOWN, PAT--PUT IT DOWN!



ROBERT E. LEE SINCLAIR AND ELLIS HINCKS, MORE WIDELY KNOWN UNDER THEIR ALIASES OF TAMPA AND HOGGIE, ARE SOON THEREAFTER TRIED ON A CHARGE OF ROBBERY IN THE FIRST DEGREE. AS A RESULT OF JUDGEMENT PASSED UPON THEM AFTER THAT TRIAL, THE FUR INDUSTRY NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT TWENTY, OR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS!

CASE
CLOSED

**THE
END**

The END of HECTOR^{the} SPECTRE



WITH THOSE DELICATELY-SHAPED HANDS AND LONG, ARTISTIC FINGERS, HECTOR OOMLAUT MIGHT HAVE BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT PAINTERS... OR...



... THOSE SAME SENSITIVE FINGERTIPS MIGHT HAVE CARRIED HIM TO RICHES AND RENOWN AS THE GREATEST CONCERT PIANIST OF OUR TIME ...

TRUE, HECTOR DID REACH THE VERY PINNACLE OF PERFECTION. BUT WAS IT IN THE WORLD OF PARTS THAT HE CHOSE TO EMPLOY HIS TALENTED MITTS? NOT PRECISELY! HECTOR, YOU SEE, BECAME A CANNON



DESPITE WHAT YOU MAY THINK, A CANNON IS NOT A GUY WITH A GAT. A CANNON IS THE UNDER-WORLD TERM FOR PICK-POCKETS IN GENERAL. AND SUCH, AS WE BEGIN THIS REPORT, IS HECTOR OOMLAUT.

THAT'S HECTOR THE SPECTRE, THE GREATEST OPERATOR OF 'EM ALL!

IF TRUE, THIS IS A GREAT RELIEF TO US, HECTOR! YOU'RE SURE YOU'RE RETIRING NOW?

YOU HAVE MY WORD, LIEUTENANT! AS A CANNON, HECTOR THE SPECTRE IS OUT OF ACTION! DONE! FINISHED! KAPUT!

WE DON'T BLAME YOU, HECTOR! IF A THING LIKE THAT CAN HAPPEN TO A MAN LIKE YOU, IT'S TIME TO QUIT!

WHAT HAPPENED TO HECTOR THE SPECTRE? WELL

TO
UNDER-
STAND
HECTOR'S
END--
IT IS
NECESSARY
FIRST TO
REGARD
HECTOR'S
BEGINNING.

HE STARTED EARLY, AS A CHILD IN THE CITY'S CROWDED CLASSROOMS. NO ONE EVER FINDS OUT NOW, BUT THINGS HAVE A HABIT OF DISAPPEARING WHEN LITTLE HECTOR DOOMLAUT IS IN THE VICINITY.

BAW! HE WALKED BY, AND MY CAREARE MONEY VANISHED!

...??... HECTOR **COULDN'T** HAVE TAKEN IT, DEAR! **LOOK!** HIS ARMS ARE **FULL** OF BOOKS!



I'M... I'M **HUNGRY!** SOMEBODY STOLE MY SANDWICHES!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! WHO WOULD DO A DASTARDLY THING LIKE EATING SOMEONE ELSE'S LUNCH?



AS HE GREW OLDER, HECTOR PROGRESSED SENSATIONALLY IN HIS CHOSEN PROFESSION. THE MAIN REASONS BEING: (A) HE IS POSSESSED OF AN UNCANNY "**GRIFF SENSE**," AND (B) HE IS A MASTER IN THE USE OF THE "**STIFF**."



GRIFF SENSE IS THAT QUALITY WHICH ENABLES A CANNON NOT ONLY TO PICK AN EASY MARK, BUT TO GAUGE HIS VICTIM'S REACTION, WHICH WAY HE'LL TURN, ETC.



THE **STIFF** IS SIMPLY A FOLDED NEWSPAPER, WHICH COVERS HIS HANDS IN ACTION.



HECTOR OPERATES IN ELEVATORS, IN GROUPS WAITING FOR TRAFFIC LIGHTS TO CHANGE, IN MOVIE TICKET LINES--- HE FIGURES ANYWHERE THERE'S A CROWD, THERE'S A FAST AND EASY BUCK.....

BEG PARDON! DIDN'T MEAN TO BUMP YOU!

THAT'S OKAY, CHUM! ACCIDENTS HAPPEN!



...BUT MOSTLY HE LIKES TO WORK IN... CAFETERIAS!

A MAN HESITATES TO DROP A TRAY OF FOOD TO SEE IF HIS POCKETS ARE BEING PICKED!



NOW AND THEN OTHERS IN THE PROFESSION
FALL UPON HARD DAYS...

THE BULLS JUST
GRABBED HARRY
THE HOOK! IT'S
GETTING SO
THEY WON'T
EVEN LET A
GUY MAKE
A **LIVING**
ANYMORE!

ME, I LIFT
A WALLET OFF
A MARK YES-
TERDAY! Y'KNOW
WHAT I GOT OUT
OF IT? I GOT
PLENTY OF
NOTHING!
BAH! WHAT
A BUSINESS!

I SHOULD'A
LISTENED TO
MY DADDY!
HE **TOLD**
ME SAFE-
CRACKING
WAS THE ONLY
STEADY FIELD!

... BUT WITH
HIS EXQUISITE
SKILL, HECTOR
NEVER FINDS
THE PICKINGS
LEAN.
BY NOW
OTHERS IN
THE SAME
LINE OF
ENDEAVOR,
WITH
ADMIRATION
NOT UNMIXED
WITH ENVY,
HAVE GIVEN
HIM HIS
SOBRIQUET.

WISHT I
HAD **HIS**
SKILL! **HE**
NEVER GETS
COLLARED!

THE DICKS GOT
NO MORE CHANCE
OF GRABBING HIM
THAN THEY GOT
OF GRABBING
A **GHOST!**

YOU
SAID IT,
ARBUTHNOT!
THAT HECTOR'S
A REGULAR
SPECTRE!

THUS HECTOR PROCEEDS ABOUT HIS BUSINESS,
SERVING BRIEF APPRENTICESHIPS AS

"LUSH WORKER" *



* OPERATING ON DRUNKS OR OTHER SLEEPERS

"SNEAKER" *



* FLEEING HIS QUARRY ON SUBWAYS OR PARK BENCH

"MOLL BUZZER" *



* BINGING (ROBBING) LADIES' SHOULDER PURSES

"FOB WORKER" *



* PURLOINING THE CONTENTS OF THE SMALL POCKET
INSIDE THE RIGHT HAND POCKET OF A MAN'S JACKET

BUT THESE JOBS HECTOR REGARDS AS PETTY--
FIT ONLY FOR NOVICES. NOW FOR HIMSELF HE
CHOOSSES THE MOST DEMANDING CATEGORY
OF ALL -- "PIT WORKER"!

EDITOR'S NOTE:

FOR THOSE OF YOU UNACQUAINTED WITH CON LEXICON, WE PAUSE BRIEFLY TO EXPLAIN. THE **PIT** IS THE HARD-TO-REACH INSIDE BREAST POCKET OF A MAN'S JACKET, WHERE MANY MALES KEEP THEIR WALLETS.

... AND TO ATTAIN SUCCESS AS A **PIT WORKER**, A CANNON MUST BE POSSESSED OF THE EPITOME OF SKILL, THE ACME OF CRAFTSMANSHIP! THEREFORE, HECTOR THE SPECTRE, BEING POSSESSED OF THE SAME, SHALL HENCEFORTH CONCENTRATE ON THE **PIT!**

THREE CHEERS AND A TIGER, HECTOR!

YOU CAN DO IT, SPECTRE!



SINCE A PIT WORKER MUST HAVE ASSISTANCE, MINOR THOUGH IT MAY BE, I HAVE SELECTED YOU LESS TALENTED MEMBERS OF THE CRAFT TO WORK WITH ME!

COME! I SHALL TRAIN YOU AS MY TROUPE OF STALLS! I, OF COURSE, SHALL BE THE CLAW!

.. ???..
STALLS?
...CLAW?

OF **COURSE**, ARBUTHNOT! THE **STALLS** DISTRACT THE VICTIM'S ATTENTION!

AND THE **CLAW** DOES THE ACTUAL STEALING!



THUS DAWNS A NEW ERA.

WE'RE STRANGERS IN TOWN...

... CAN YOU DIRECT US TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY...

... ON ACCOUNT WE'RE STUDENT-TYPE GUYS?

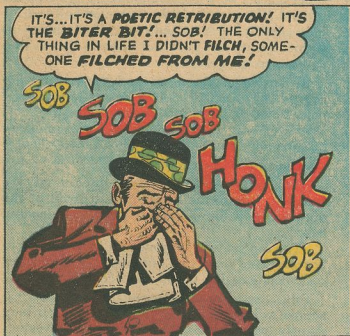
MY WORD -- STUDENTS, EH? HEH HEH! WELL, BOYS, YOU JUST TAKE THE 5TH AVENUE BUS...



BANDITS!
BURGLARS!
VANDALS!

HELP!
POLICE!





WHEREUPON -- AN AWAKENED CONSCIENCE IS A WOND'ROUS THING! -- HECTOR LEADS THE LAW TO SUCH OF HIS LOOT AS REMAINS ON HAND. THUS ENDS OUR REPORT ON HIM, EXCEPT PERHAPS TO ADD THAT HE STILL SEES EVANGELINE. ONCE EVERY MONTH, ON VISITORS' DAY....

H IS FOR HOMICIDE

DETEKTIVE Sgt. Mark Fabian reluctantly dropped his newspaper as the telephone shrilled in the squad room. His gimlet grey eyes combed the room half hoping someone else had heard it and would answer. But he was doing a lonesome act. Nobody else was in the room. With a disgusted sigh, he let his tilted chair come to rest on all fours and reached for the phone.

"Homicide. Fabian speaking."

He held the receiver to his ear and reached for a scratch pad on which he quickly scribbled something. Then, with something like a grunt, cradled the receiver and reached for his hat. With the same easy motion he propelled himself toward the door.

"Where's Polo?" he barked to a detective intently studying his countenance as he massaged it with an electric shaver.

"Aren't you guys on speaking terms anymore?" grinned the detective. "There's talk that you guys even bathe together."

Pat Polo was Fabian's partner and they went together like ham and eggs. But the levity of the detective didn't sit well with Fabian.

"Cut the comedy," he snapped. "We have to check something out on a call that just came in."

"He's having a cup of coffee at the Greek's," answered the detective. Fabian was already moving to the door with a lithe-like grace before the sentence was half finished and the echo of the slammed door filled the room. With a shrug the detective went back to his shaving.

Two minutes later, a squad car skidded to a stop in front of a small beanery and the impatient honking of the horn made Pat Polo whirl around on his stool and glance out into the street. He dropped his cigarette butt in the half-finished cup of coffee, fished out a dime and walked out toward the car.

"What's the hurry?" he complained.

But Fabian had the car in gear and roared away from the curb with a getaway that snapped Polo's head back.

"How many cups of coffee do you have to have?" he said irritably.

Fabian's touchy disposition meant one thing to Polo. They were going out on a case. And Fabian was already winding himself up for come what may. They let silence take over for a couple of minutes as the car maneuvered swiftly through traffic. Fabian hated to use the siren except in extreme emergencies and the way he handled the car, it seldom was necessary to use the whine to shove traffic out his way.

Finally, Polo spoke up. "Okay, I'm listening. What's it all about?"

"It's that dame we had stashed away. The little

witness who was going to help us finally get our hooks into Mario."

"What about her?" frowned Polo. "Only us and the D. A. know where she is."

"Somebody else found out about our little secret. They just found her with three neat, round bullet holes in her."

Polo whistled under his breath. "There goes our case."

"You're fast on deduction today, Partner."

Polo didn't have time to drum up an answer to the biting sarcasm as the car skidded to a stop in front of an empty lot. A crowd of curious men and women were being waved on by an officer, but they morosely kept peering toward the lot where some other officers were huddled around a figure on the ground. The picture of the crumpled body with a long shapely leg stretched out as if exhibiting its former beauty met Polo and Fabian's eyes as they came up to the group.

A patrolman stood up and respectfully addressed Fabian. "Sharkey here was walking his beat when he heard the mutt whining around the body. I mean—he didn't see the body until the mutt drew his attention to it. The weeds and all that—"

"Did you call for an ambulance?"

"Yes, Sarge. And the body is just the way we found it. The medical examiner is giving it the once over now. Boy—she sure was a good looking babe."

"You can get back on your beat now. I'll talk to Sharkey. And for crying out loud, get those nosey customers ganging up on the sidewalk moving."

Fabian recognized Moscovitz, the medical examiner as he drew closer to the body. That long shapely leg sticking out the way it did revealing a patch of skin where the stocking line ended seemed sort of offensive to Fabian. Almost as if she was on the make again. Moscovitz walked up to him and began to spell out what he knew in that tired voice of his.

"Three shots, Sarge. The first one probably did the trick. It caught her in the back of the head and hit the brain. One got her in the neck and the other one in the back."

Fabian nodded in an abstract way while his eyes searched the area. To one side, he noticed a shivering poodle who whined intermittently.

"Is that the mutt?" he pointed.

Polo was at his elbow. "Yep. She must've been walking it when they gave it to her. Nobody heard any shots. I figure they had a silencer."

"These dames and their mutts. I told her to stay under cover until the trial was over."

"You gotta get some air. If I'm in one room

more than 24 hours, I'm ready to start conking my bean against the wall."

Fabian started to say something and then he grinned wryly at Polo who winked back while he unwrapped a stick of gum which he stuck into his fat face.

"Okay, Moscovitz," sighed Fabian, as he heard the dim whine of the ambulance approaching. "I guess it's pretty cut and dry. You can have her."

"What now?" asked Polo, as he fell into step with him. They traced their way back out of the weeded lot kicking tin cans out of the way.

"What do you think, Pat?" replied Fabian. "She was our case. What do you think?"

"I think we're going to be throwing a lot of questions at our boy, Mario," answered Polo, almost as if talking to himself.

They slid behind the wheel of the squad car and started back to the precinct. Suddenly, Fabian whipped the wheel more than a half turn to his left and they skidded into a U turn and started off in another direction.

"You ought to give a guy notice when you do something like that," barked Polo. "Where we going?"

"Why wait for him to frame a nice story which he'll have time to do if we call him in. Let's catch him with his tongue twisted by grabbing him in his club. He won't have time to think so fast—especially if he don't expect us."

"You're on the ball, Sonny. I think I would have liked to have thought of that."

A few minutes later, the car drew up before a night club whose facade was covered with half-dressed show girls. Fabian couldn't help thinking how kind night was to the greyish-looking building. It was the lights blinking and winking that brought the tinsel magic to these shoddy places. A pinch-faced slim hood stared curiously as the car stopped and cockily walked toward the car keeping his hands in his pocket. As Polo heaved his bulk out, recognition dawned in the hood's eyes and he quickly whirled around and slithered through the door.

"He went to tell Papa company's coming," laughed Polo wryly.

Fabian vaguely nodded and Polo was aware of the impersonal film that had covered his eyes. He knew that look and it boded no good to friend Mario. They pushed open the door of the club to find two more of Mario's boys smiling mirthlessly at them.

"Hi Sarge—yer a little early for the first show. The goils don't go on until ten o'clock."

"Where's Mario?" Fabian blandly asked. And his voice seemed almost gentle.

One of them shrugged in an exaggerated manner. "I don't think he's come in yet. Is the boss in yet?" he said, stalling for time, as he turned to the other one.

Before he could answer, Fabian and Polo heard a silky voice behind them.

"Somebody looking for me?" It was Mario with

tiny beads of perspiration dotting his brow. He was buttoning the jacket of his suit and there was almost something breathless about the deliberate calm way he moved and talked. No doubt he had been taken by surprise at the appearance of Fabian and Polo.

"Let's go into your office, Mario. I want some answers," said Fabian in an off-hand way. Even Polo was surprised at the low pitch to his voice.

Mario started to say something and then remembering the act he was putting on gallantly indicated a doorway in the background. As the trio moved off on the scuffed carpet, his two henchmen began to follow.

Fabian suddenly stopped and swung around. His glance contemptuously raked the two hoods who paused. "You're not invited. Get lost."

His voice has taken on an ominous note and the two hoods looked in embarrassed silence to Mario for instructions. Mario smiled and showed his even, white teeth.

"You heard what the detective said, Boys. Get lost."

Mario didn't bother to hold the swinging door of his office open for Fabian and Polo but let it slam contemptuously toward them. He headed for his desk and reached for a cigarette. Fabian noticed that he was trying hard to keep his hand steady as he put the match to it.

"What made you think you could get away with it," barked Fabian, without any preliminaries.

"I don't know what yer talkin' about," replied the gangster, as he flopped into the leather chair behind his desk. "Do what?"

"Those gunsels of yours are slipping," said Fabian. "We got to the girl before she passed out. Her description tallies with those hoods outside."

Mario tried to stretch his lips into a smile, but his twitching lips only accented his greenish pallor when he digested what Fabian had said.

"Let's go downtown," said Polo coming toward him.

Mario's answer was to utter a soft oath, pull open a drawer and snake his hand toward a .38. At the same time, Fabian darted toward him from the other side, lifted one of his size 11 brogans and kicked the drawer shut pinning Mario's hand. The screech of pain Mario let out brought his boys on the run but Polo's gun had the business end facing them and they wilted.

As they herded Mario and his gunsels toward the pie wagon, Pat Polo turned to Fabian. "He had to do something stupid because he didn't have a story ready. I never thought he'd buy that yarn of yours."

"I always figured their thinking tanks were overrated. If they had any real brains, they wouldn't play outside the law."

Polo nodded. "Anyway, we saved the citizens the expense of a court trial."

THE END

He was spawned in a neighborhood where the kids learned all the answers at an early age. Most of them drifted into gangs--took pride in their "toughness". They were hard and cynical with an "I'll get mine" attitude. Nobody knows what guided Kenny Cogan into the ranks of the police department but when he put on the uniform, he took pride in being...

THE COP!



WELL, WELL--
LOCAL BOY
MAKES
GOOD,
EH?

WE'LL BE SEEING
EACH OTHER,
BRUNO! THIS
IS MY BEAT,
NOW!

WELL, WE
DON'T WANT
THAT NICE
SHINY BADGE
TO GET DUSTY,
EH, BRUNO?

WALKING MY
WAY, WILLIE?
MOM'LL HAVE
DINNER
READY!

I'LL BE
ALONG
LATER!

DIDN'T I TELL YOU HE'D TRY TO
THROW HIS WEIGHT AROUND AS
SOON AS HE PUT ON THE
UNIFORM? THAT'S HOW THEY
ALL ARE!

WELL, HE
AIN'T SHOVIN'
ME AROUND!

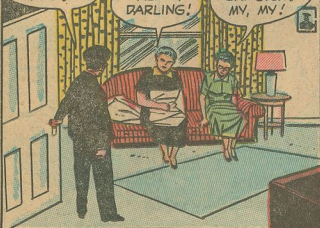
A COPPER--!
(PTOOOO--!)

BUT NOT EVERYBODY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
FELT THAT WAY ABOUT COPS...

HI, MA! HI, MRS. GROSS!
THE JOINT IS SURROUNDED
AND WE'RE PINCHING
EVERYBODY
IN IT!

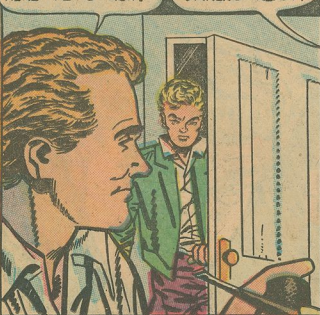
KENNY,
DARLING!

WHY, KENNY...
YOU LOOK SO
HANDSOME IN
YOUR NEW
UNIFORM!
MY, MY!



YEAH... HE SAID...!
HERE HE IS NOW!

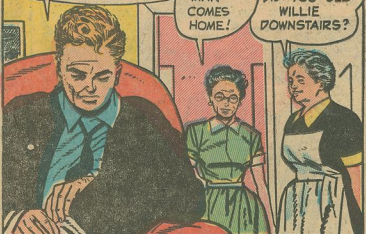
WASH UP, WILLIE!
DINNER'S READY!



BOY... MY DOGS ARE
BARKING! NOW I KNOW
WHY THEY CALL US
FLAT FEET. THAT'S HOW
I'M GOING TO WIND UP.
WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

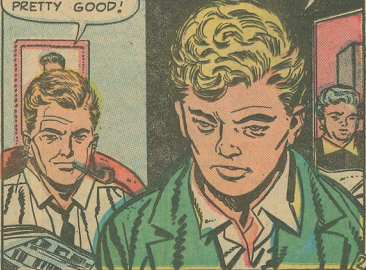
WELL...
I'LL BE
GETTING
ALONG
BEFORE
MY OLD
MAN
COMES
HOME!

I HAVE
SOMETHING
YOU LIKE!
BE READY
IN A
MINUTE.
DID YOU SEE
WILLIE
DOWNSTAIRS?



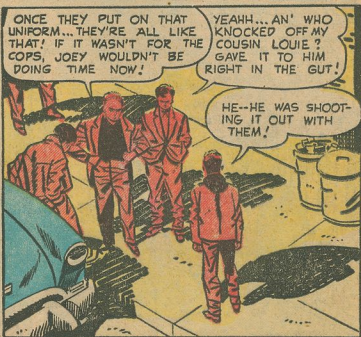
HOW COME YOU HANG OUT WITH
THAT CREEP, BRUNO, INSTEAD
OF PLAYING STICK BALL
WITH THE FELLOWS? YOU
USED TO BE
PRETTY GOOD!

DO I HAVE
TO REPORT
TO YOU
ALREADY?





THEY LEFT HIM ALONE--AND HE CONTINUED TO BROOD, AND THEN HE SUDDENLY SLAMMED OUT OF THE HOUSE...

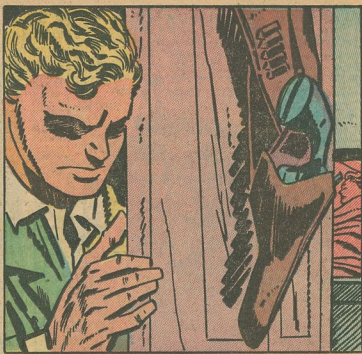


HE MOVED WITH AN EASY, SNAKY MOTION AND HIS VOICE WAS SILKY AS HE SPIT OUT THE WORDS THROUGH CLOSED TEETH, AND SUDDENLY HE WAS IN THEIR MIDST AS IF HE HAD MATERIALIZED OUT OF THIN AIR...



THE HURLY BURLY OF THE CITY STREETS HAD GIVEN WAY TO THE QUIET OF NIGHT WHEN THE COGAN APARTMENT DOOR WAS QUIETLY OPENED...

THAT YOU, WILLIE? I LEFT SOMETHING IN THE ICE BOX FOR YOU! DON'T MAKE ANY NOISE -- KENNY'S SLEEPING!



WITH THEIR STOMACHS KNOTTED WITH THE THIN ROPES OF FEAR AND ANXIETY, THEY ACCOMPANIED SPIDER CROSS-TOWN IN A TRUCK. IF THERE WAS ONLY SOME WAY TO GET OUT OF IT! BUT THEY DIDN'T DARE SHOW SPIDER THEY WERE AFRAID! AFTER ALL... THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE TOUGH! AND THEN IT STARTED!





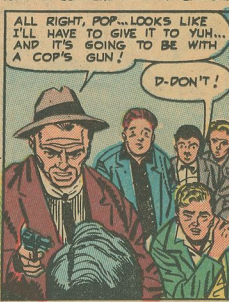
THE COP'S INSTINCT WARNED THAT HE'D HAVE TO MOVE FAST AND HE BEGAN TO PROWL THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNTIL HE PICKED UP A LEAD...



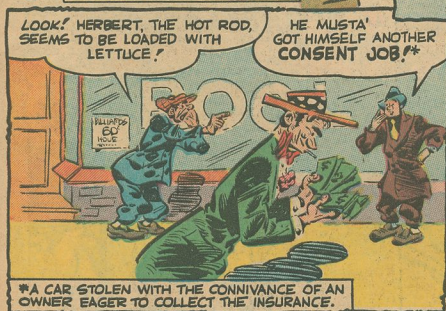
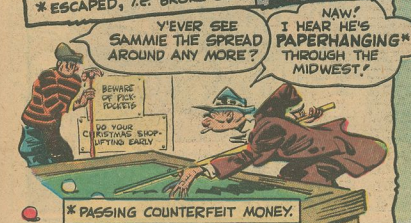
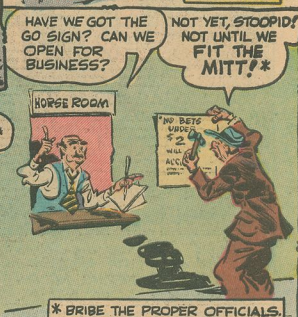
AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT! ALL I KNOW IS THAT THEY WAS TALKING ABOUT CIGARETTES IN A LOFT ON 19TH STREET! NOW LAY OFF!



AND THEN THE CLOCK READ 1:15 IN THAT LOFT ON 19TH STREET AND THINGS WERE STILL HAPPENING...



The LINGO of the LAWLESS



Working the day watch out of MISSING PERSONS you meet some interesting characters, alive and otherwise. And I can't help feeling sorry for this little guy, Winstable. His wife's disappearance leaves him alone in the world--he needs consolation, sympathy... and it leads me smack into the

CASE OF THE

SOGGY BLONDE

FILE # 1826



MY NAME'S FABIAN, MISTER--DETECTIVE FABIAN! YOU LOOKING FOR SOMEBODY IN PARTICULAR, OR WILL I DO?

I...THEY SENT ME UP HERE... IT'S MY WIFE, EVELYN... SHE'S... SHE'S VANISHED...

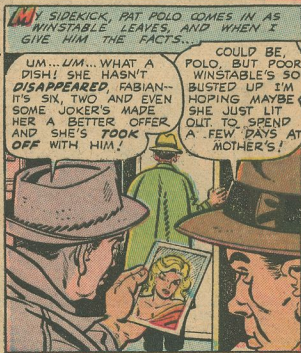
When I first see Mr. Steven Winstable he is upset and worried. It could be an act because when a wife disappears the first guy you tab as the wrongo is her husband. But I can see Winstable is either sincere or he's the world's greatest actor.



WE...WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN SO HAPPY, EVELYN! AND I... WHY SHOULD SHE WALK OUT ON ME, DETECTIVE FABIAN... WHY?

TAKE IT EASY, MR. WINSTABLE! MAYBE IT WASN'T A WALK! EVER YOU SHE MIGHT'VE MET WITH FOUL PLAY?

NO, SAYS LITTLE WINSTABLE. FOUL PLAY IS OUT! EVELYN'S NEVER DONE A WRONG THING IN HER LIFE. WHY SHOULD SHE HAVE ANY ENEMIES?



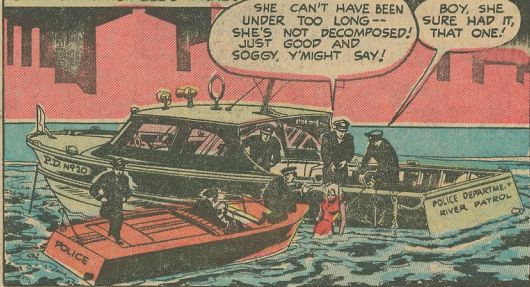
MY SIDEKICK, PAT POLO COMES IN AS WINSTABLE LEAVES, AND WHEN I GIVE HIM THE FACTS...

UM...UM... WHAT A DISH! SHE HASN'T DISAPPEARED, FABIAN--IT'S SIX, TWO AND EVEN SOME JOKER'S MADE HER A BETTER OFFER AND SHE'S TOOK OFF WITH HIM!

COULD BE, POLO, BUT POOR WINSTABLE'S SO BUSTED UP I'M HOPEING MAYBE SHE JUST LIT OUT TO SPEND A FEW DAYS AT MOTHER'S!

GET POLO TO DO A FAST CHECK ON THE WINSTABLES, AND LEARN SHE'S A MITE YOUNGER THAN HE, BUT NOBODY'S EVER KNOWN HER TO PLAY AROUND. THEY'RE HAPPY! THEY'RE ALSO FAIRLY WELL OFF, HER FATHER HAVING LEFT HER SOME MONEY. I TELL WINSTABLE NOT TO WORRY-- SHE'LL PROBABLY BOB UP IN A DAY OR SO.

WHILE LATER, SHE DOES BOB UP BUT NOT IN THE WAY I FIGURE. THE BODY OF A BLONDE IS DRAGGED FROM THE DRINK--FULLY CLOTHED, BEARING NO MARKS OF ANY KIND, VIOLENT OR OTHERWISE. THE TELEPRINTED DESCRIPTION CHECKS PRETTY GOOD WITH OUR DATA ON WINSTABLE'S FRAU.



THE ODDS ARE AGAINST IT, BUT ON A HUNCH I GET HOLD OF STEVEN WINSTABLE, AND WHEN I GET DOWNTOWN, THE CORONER IS JUST COMPLETING HIS INVESTIGATION.

...?... OH, HELLO, FABIAN! NOTHING FOR YOU HERE! THE BLONDE DID HERSELF IN...HER LUNGS ARE FULL OF WATER! OFFICIAL VERDICT, SUICIDE!

DOC, LET'S GIVE MR. WINSTABLE HERE A LOOK AT HER... OKAY?



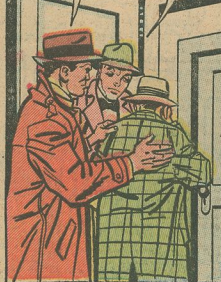
WHY DID YOU DO IT, EVELYN... WHY?

NOTHING WE CAN DO HERE, MR. WINSTABLE... WE'D BETTER GO!



HE'S BEAT! I BETTER RUN HIM HOME!

SURE-- SURE!

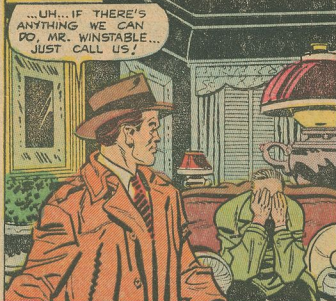


THOSE ROUTINE QUESTIONS MUST HAVE BEEN TOUGH FOR YOU. BUT IT'S PART OF MY JOB!

MY POOR EVELYN! SHE WAS SO-- BEAUTIFUL!



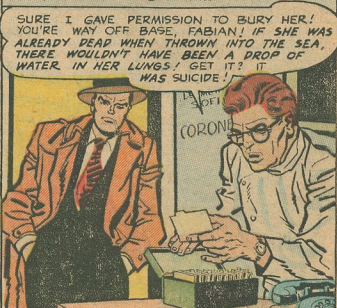
HIS HOUSE HAD THAT OLD LOOK BUT YOU COULD SMELL THE MONEY THAT WAS THERE...



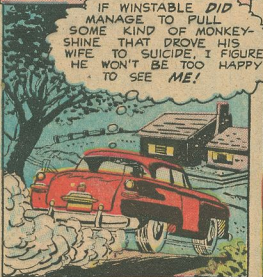
ID PROBABLY HAVE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT IT THEN, BUT ALONG IN THERE THE INVESTIGATOR FOR THE INSURANCE COMPANY POPS IN ON ME.



WITH THAT, MY OLD COP'S BRAIN STARTS PERCOLATING. SO, BACK I GO TO CORONER RUDIN, TO CHECK A BIG IF...



IVE LATCHED ON TO AN IDEA BY NOW, THOUGH, AND IT STILL RANKLES ME. I FIGURE A RETURN VISIT TO THE LITTLE MAN'S WEIRD OLD HOUSE IS IN ORDER...



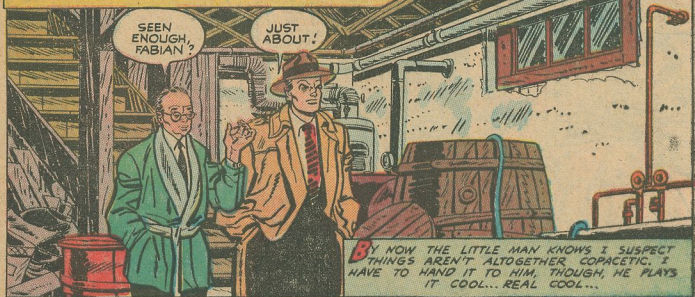
BUT HE'S REAL FRIENDLY IN HIS SAD LITTLE WAY...



IT'S LONESOME WITHOUT HER! BUT, WELL... ONE HAS TO KEEP ON LIVING!



BUT OUR TOUR DOESN'T INCLUDE THE CELLAR, AND WHEN I BRACE HIM TO TAKE ME THERE, HE PAUSES ONLY FOR THE MEREST FRACTION OF A SECOND. THEN WINSTABLE SAYS, "SURE... THE CELLAR'S A MESS, BUT... SURE!"



SEEN ENOUGH, FABIAN?

JUST ABOUT!

BY NOW THE LITTLE MAN KNOWS I SUSPECT THINGS AREN'T ALTOGETHER COPACETIC. I HAVE TO HAND IT TO HIM, THOUGH, HE PLAYS IT COOL... REAL COOL...

...BUT LIKE I TELL HIM, I'VE SEEN ENOUGH.

COME AGAIN, DETECTIVE FABIAN! ANY TIME!

YEAH!

GO AWAY FROM THERE... I GO STRAIGHT BACK TO CORONER RUDIN!

DOC, I WANT THE BODY OF EVELYN WINSTABLE EXHUMED!

YOU GOT ROCKS IN YOUR HEAD, FABIAN? WHY?

BECAUSE I THINK I'VE GLOMMED ON TO A MURDER!

MURDER? YOU THINK SHE WAS THROWN INTO THE SEA?

YOU'VE CLEAN SNAPPED YOUR CAP, FABIAN! HOW DO YOU COME UP WITH AN IDEA LIKE THAT? HER LUNGS WERE LITERALLY FULL OF WATER!

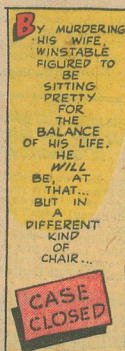
I KNOW THAT! BUT I WANT THE LUNGS PARTICULARLY EXAMINED WHEN YOU MAKE THE AUTOPSY!

?

OKAY--SO I DO AN AUTOPSY! BUT... THE VERDICT WAS SUICIDE, AND SHE'S BEEN BURIED! YOU'VE GOT TO GET WINSTABLE'S PERMISSION TO DIG HER UP! THERE'S A JOKE FOR YOU!

YEAH! LOOK AT ME... I'M LAUGHING!





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A.H. - Kans - Atlas Cup Winner.



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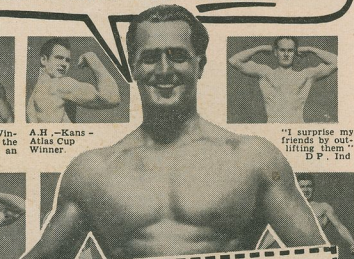
"When I started your course I weighed only 141. Now weigh 170" - T.K. New York



"Here's my photo showing just how I look today. I owe it all to you" - W.D. New York



"Have put 3½" on chest (normal), 2½" expanded" - F.S. NY



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